

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: EXTRACT FROM POWELL BRIEFING ON HUSSEIN AFFAIR

NO. 19

1. FOLLOWING IS EXTRACT OF RELEVANT PORTIONS OF WHITE
HOUSE BRIEFING OF FEBRUARY 18 ON SUBJECT OF WASHINGTON
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POST STORY ON HUSSEIN QUOTE:

2. Q. WHAT ABOUT HUSSEIN?

3. MR. POWELL: IT IS A POLICY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION NOT
TO COMMENT ON - EITHER CONFIRM OR DENY - ANY STORIES CON-
CERNING ALLEGED COVERT ACTIVITIES. BY DEFINITION, ANY
COMMENT WOULD BE A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS SINCE THE OPERA-
TION IN QUESTION WOULD NO LONGER BE COVERT.

4. I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT ALMOST FROM THE FIRST DAY OF THE ADMINISTRATION, SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, INCLUDING THE JOINT CHIEFS, HAVE BEEN ENGAGED THROUGH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL IN AN INTENSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ALL SENSITIVE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

5. THIS REVIEW IS NEARING COMPLETION AND, ON THE BASIS OF ITS FINDINGS, THE PRESIDENT WILL MAKE BASIC DECISIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. THE PURPOSE OF THESE ACTIVITIES, OF COURSE, IS TO PROTECT THE SECURITY OF OUR COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE REVIEW IS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT ALL ACTIVITIES ARE PROPER, TO ENSURE FULL COMPLIANCE WITH OVERSIGHT PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY LAW, AND TO MAKE SURE THAT WHAT CAN BE DONE OPENLY IS NOT DONE SECRETLY.

6. I WOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT KING HUSSEIN IS AN OUTSTANDING NATIONAL LEADER AND THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN REDUCING TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

7. Q. CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE - WHAT CAME AFTER ROLE?

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8. MR. POWELL: IN REDUCING TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

9.Q.FOR EXAMPLE, JODY, LAST FEBRUARY 11TH IN MANCHESTER, JIMMY CARTER SAID, "IF THE CIA EVER MAKES A MISTAKE, I WILL BE THE ONE AS PRESIDENT TO CALL A PRESS CONFERENCE. I WILL TELL YOU AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO VIOLATED THE LAW. THIS IS THE PUNISHMENT THAT I RECOMMEND. THIS IS THE CORRECTIVE ACTION THAT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN. AND I PROMISE YOU THAT IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN."

10. IS THAT PROMISE INOPERATIVE?

11. MR. POWELL: I BELIEVE WHAT WE HAVE DONE IN THIS REGARD IS CONSISTENT WITH THAT STATEMENT.

12. Q. HOW IS IT CONSISTENT WITH THAT STATEMENT? THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO FOLLOW.

13. MR. POWELL: WELL, I AM UNDER SOME CONSTRAINTS WITH REGARD TO HOW FAR I CAN GO IN PROVING OUR POINT, AND I AM IN A POSITION OF HAVING TO ASK YOU TO READ CAREFULLY, AND WITH YOUR USUAL ATTENTION TO DETAILED NUANCE, THE STATE-

MENT THAT HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO YOU AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHAT I HAVE SAID AND MAKE, OF COURSE, YOUR OWN JUDGMENTS, AS YOU COMMONLY DO.

14. Q. DO YOU FEEL IT IS CONSISTENT THAT IN AN OPEN ADMINISTRATION PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE TO READ BETWEEN THE LINES? SHOULDN'T YOU JUST COME OUT AND SAY WHAT HAS TO BE SAID?

15. MR. POWELL: I THINK TO THE EXTENT THAT WE CAN, WE WILL CERTAINLY DO THAT.

16. Q. ALSO, THERE SEEMS TO BE IN YOUR LAST REMARK - MAY-
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BE I AM MISREADING THIS, JODY, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE AN IMPLICATION THAT WE SHOULD LOOK AT THIS CAREFULLY AND I SUPPOSE DRAW THE CONCLUSION THAT A PAYMENT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. BUT IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PAYMENT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED, YOU BETTER SAY SO, BECAUSE IT IS NOT OUR JOB TO DO THAT.

17. MR. POWELL: I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT CONCLUSION TO DRAW, AND I WILL BE WILLING TO HAVE YOU DISREGARD MY ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOU TO READ THE STATEMENT CAREFULLY.

18. Q. JODY, I AM STILL CONFUSED ON WHAT YOU INSIST IS CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THAT STATEMENT AND THE STATEMENT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MADE DURING THE CAMPAIGN REPEATEDLY, NOT JUST IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, THAT HE, HIMSELF, PERSONALLY WOULD BE THE ONE TO REPORT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHEN THERE WAS A WRONGDOING, AND THAT HE WOULD TELL WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT WRONGDOING, AND THAT HE WOULD ANNOUNCE WHAT ACTION HE HAD TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO THAT WRONGDOING.

19. NOW, MAYBE WE ARE ALL WRONG IN ASSUMING THAT THERE MAY BE A WRONGDOING. IF THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO SAY THAT.

20. MR. POWELL: WELL, I THINK WHAT I SAID AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STATEMENT WAS THAT WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM OR DENY BY COMMENT ON THIS THING. THAT IS THE SITUATION WE ARE IN.

21. Q. WHY AREN'T YOU IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM OR DENY?

22. Q. JODY, YOU SAID IT IS THE POLICY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION NOT TO COMMENT - EITHER CONFIRM OR DENY - ANY ALLEGED COVERT ACTIVITIES. THAT SOUNDS LIKE A POLICY STATEMENT ACROSS THE BOARD.

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23. MR. POWELL: IT IS A POLICY STATEMENT AND I BELIEVE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO FULFILL OUR CAMPAIGN PROMISES CONSISTENT WITH THAT.

24.Q.JODY, WHY AREN'T YOU IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM OR DENY? WHY CAN'T YOU JUST DO THAT?

25. MR. POWELL: I THINK THAT WAS COVERED IN MY OPENING STATEMENT.

26. Q. JODY, YOU MENTIONED CONSTRAINTS, THOUGH. WHAT KINDS OF CONSTRAINTS ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? MAYBE IF WE GOT AN IDEA -

27. MR. POWELL: THE CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY WHAT I JUST SAID AND BY THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF THAT STATEMENT.

28. Q. WHEN WAS THIS POLICY MADE?

29. MR. POWELL: ABOUT MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT.

30. Q. JODY, HAVE YOU ALL MADE ANY EFFORT TO FIND OUT WHERE THE STORY CAME FROM?

31. MR. POWELL: I MIGHT SAY IN SERIOUSNESS THAT, WITH REGARD TO THE COMMENT ABOUT MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT, THAT IS NOT EXACTLY ACCURATE, BUT YOU HAVE TO ESTABLISH YOUR POLICY AS YOU ARE CONFRONTED WITH SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE POLICY TO DEAL WITH THEM.

32. Q. JODY, DOES THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION AGREE WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS DENIED THESE ALLEGATIONS OF WRONGDOING?

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33. MR. POWELL: I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH WHAT THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SAID.

34. Q. DOES THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AGREE WITH THAT?

35. MR. POWELL: I DON'T HAVE A COMMENT ON THAT.

36. MR. POWELL: I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH WHAT THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT SAID.

37. Q. I AM TELLING YOU THEY HAVE DENIED ALLEGATIONS OF WRONGDOING.

38. MR. POWELL: WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I DON'T THINK IT IS WISE IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS FOR ME TO BE COMMENTING ON WHAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS SAID -

39. Q. WILL THE PRESIDENT HAVE NO COMMENT TO MAKE?

40. Q. ARE YOU MAKING ANY EFFORT TO FIND OUT HOW THIS STORY GOT OUT?

41. MR. POWELL: NOT THAT I AM AWARE OF, NO.

42. Q. JODY, DID YOU DISCOURAGE US FROM INFERRING FROM THIS THAT YOU FIRST FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS FROM THE POST AND THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS TRYING TO RUN IT DOWN; YOU DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS TRUE OR NOT? IS THAT AN INFERENCE WE SHOULD NOT DRAW?

43. MR. POWELL: FOLKS, PART OF WHAT YOU SAID IS RIGHT AND PART OF IT IS WRONG, AND I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GO ANY FURTHER ON IT.

44. Q. TO GO BACK TO THIS POLICY, MAYBE YOU CAN EXPAND ON THIS. ARE YOU SAYING THAT IT IS THE POLICY OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CARTER ADMINISTRATION NOT TO COMMENT ON ANY COVERT ACITIVITY NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, BECAUSE YOU SAID IT WOULD THEN NO LONGER BE COVERT? I AM ASKING YOU FOR CLARIFICATION. IS THAT THE POLICY?

45. MR. POWELL: I THINK THAT THE PRINCIPLE THERE IS FAIRLY CLEAR: THAT IF YOU DISCUSS ALLEGATIONS ABOUT COVERT ACTIVITIES, AND THEY ARE SECRET ACTIVITIES, THEY THE, IN FACT, NO LONGER ARE SECRET.

46. Q. DOES THAT MEAN THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS RIGHT TO ATTEMPT AND CONGRESS WAS WRONG TO PENETRATE THAT ATTEMPT TO CONCEAL THE ANGOLAN INVOLVEMENT WHICH CARTER CRITICIZED DURING THE CAMPAIGN?

47. MR. POWELL: I DON'T THINK IT ADDRESSED IT.

48. Q. IT SEEMS EXACTLY THE SAME THING.

49. MR. POWELL: I DON'T THINK IT ADDRESSES IT, AND IT IS CERTAINLY NOT OUR INTENT TO ADDRESS THAT SITUATION OR ANYBODY ELSE'S SITUATION.

50. Q. DID THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF GIVE YOU YOUR INSTRUCTIONS ON WHAT YOU WERE TO TELL US THIS MORNING HERE ABOUT THE POLICY?

51. MR. POWELL: THE STATEMENT I MADE TO YOU WAS THE PRODUCT OF THE THINKING OF A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING MYSELF.

52. Q. INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT?

53. MR. POWELL: LET ME FINISH. AND THE PRESIDENT DID REVIEW THAT STATEMENT.

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54. Q. DID THE PRESIDENT OR ANYBODY ELSE IN THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE ANY ADVANCE NOTICE THAT THIS STORY WAS COMING OUT IN THE WASHINGTON POST?

55. MR. POWELL: WELL, NOT OTHER THAN THE SORT OF RUMBLINGS WHEN ONE NORMALLY HEARS RUMBLINGS ABOUT MAJOR STORIES BEFORE THEY HIT THE PAPER.

56. Q. IS IT CORRECT TO INFER THAT THE POLICY FOLLOWED THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE STORY WAS COMING OUT, THAT YOU DEVELOPED THE POLICY AFTER YOU KNEW ABOUT THE STORY?

57. MR. POWELL: WELL, CERTAINLY WE MADE NO BONES ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE DEVELOPED A POLICY TO DEAL WITH THIS SORT OF SITUATION AT THE TIME THAT WE WERE CONFRONTED WITH THIS SITUATION. IT WAS NOT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT, IN TRANSITION PLANNING, WE ANTICIPATED, AND I HAVE NO QUALMS ABOUT ADMITTING THAT.

58. Q. WHEN YOU HEARD RUMBLINGS OF THIS STORY, DID YOU ASK ANYBODY AT THE WASHINGTON POST TO HOLD IT UP UNTIL AFTER VANCE SAW KING HUSSEIN?

59. MR. POWELL: WE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO INJECT OURSELVES INTO THE EDITORIAL JUDGMENT OF THE POST AT ALL WITH REGARD TO THAT. THAT IS A DECISION FOR THEM TO MAKE. I THINK WHAT OUR PREFERENCES WOULD BE IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT WOULD PROBABLY BE REASONABLY CLEAR. BUT THAT IS NOT A DECISION THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION FEELS THAT WE HAVE A RIGHT TO MAKE.

60. Q. ALL RIGHT, JODY. DID SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE KNOW ABOUT THIS STORY BEFORE HE WENT IN TO SEE KING HUSSEIN?

61. MR. POWELL: I AM NOT SURE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT HE
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DID.

62. Q. YOU BELIEVE HE DID. IS KING HUSSEIN COMING TO
WASHINGTON? HAS HE BEEN INVITED BY THE PRESIDENT?

63. MR. POWELL: I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW. LET ME SAY
ON THAT QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER HE KNEW WHEN HE WENT IN,

THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO ADDRESS THAT TO THE STATE DEPART-
MENT. AS A MATTER OF FACT -

64. HAS HE EVEN GONE IN YET, OR HE JUST DID, OR SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?

65. MR. SCHECTER: HE DID KNOW.

66. MR. POWELL: HE DID KNOW.

67. Q. DOES THE PRESIDENT THINK THAT CASH PAYMENTS TO
FOREIGN LEADERS ARE PROPER ACTIVITIES?

68. MR. POWELL: I AM GOING TO FALL BACK ON MY STATEMENT.

69. Q. ISN'T IT A FACT THAT BY YOUR NOT CONFIRMING OR
DENYING THIS STORY, YOU ARE KEEPING KING HUSSEIN UNDER A
CLOUD WHEN HIS OWN GOVERNMENT SAYS IT IS NOT TRUE? YOU
CALL HIM OUTSTANDING, BUT YOU WON'T SAY WHETHER OR NOT HE
GOT THIS MONEY, SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE KING HUSSEIN AND
THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT THE SECRETARY IS TALKING TO HIM
ABOUT?

70. MR. POWELL: WELL, THAT IS A GOOD QUESTION, BUT I
THINK OUR POSITION ON THIS PARTICULAR MATTER HAS BEEN
MADE PRETTY CLEAR.

71. Q. TWO SHORT QUESTIONS ON THE HUSSEIN THING. (A),
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HAS THERE BEEN ANY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND KING HUSSEIN ON THIS MATTER? TWO, HAS THE PRESIDENT
OR SECRETARY VANCE FORMALLY INVITED KING HUSSEIN TO COME
TO WASHINGTON?

72. MR. POWELL: I KNOW THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT - WELL, LET ME SAY, I FEEL CERTAIN

THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND KING HUSSEIN ON THE MATTER. I DON'T KNOW
WHETHER ANY SORT OF INVITATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED.
END QUOTE.
HARTMAN

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